

Washington, D.C. - The House of Representatives today overwhelmingly passed (357 to 65) bi-partisan legislation to boost transportation programs under the new federal government's surface transportation bill. The six-year, \$275 billion highway and transit bill includes essential funding for many Illinois transportation projects.

As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Highland Park) was instrumental in securing federal funds for key 10th District transportation projects which include: creation of Metra's STAR Line providing service to Arlington Heights, Hoffman Estates and Rolling Meadows and funding for the reconstruction and widening of the Route 60 Bridge over Interstate 94 in Lake Forest.

"Updating our transportation infrastructure is critical to reducing highway gridlock and improving our environment," said Congressman Kirk. "Unity among Illinois legislators in the House led to funding for key transportation projects in the state and in the 10th Congressional District."

The new federal transportation bill provides federal funding for the following 10th District transportation projects:

- \$8 million for the reconstruction and widening of the Rt. 60 bridge over Interstate 94,
- \$1 million for the addition of turn lanes to Northwest Highway at the Arthur Avenue Union Pacific grade crossing and at the Prindel underpass in Arlington Heights,
- \$500,000 to implement an Intelligent Transportation System demonstration project on Lake-Cook Road providing drivers with real-time travel information between US 12 and US 41 and
- Federal funding for the resurfacing of Euclid Avenue in Arlington Heights between Walnut and Douglas Avenue.

"With suburb-to-suburb commuting, we need suburb-to-suburb transportation solutions," said Congressman Kirk. "An Intelligent Transportation System for the Lake-Cook Road corridor will alert drivers to problems and provide them with alternative routes. This will help reduce gridlock along a key traffic artery in our community."

Funding for Metra's STAR Line will help reduce traffic in our growing western suburbs. The \$1.2 billion project will connect O'Hare International Airport with western suburbs, including Arlington Heights, Rolling Meadows and Hoffman Estates, and as far south as Joliet.

"Our western suburbs continue to grow at a rapid rate and deserve a commuter rail system that models the North Line," said Congressman Kirk. "Building Metra's new STAR Line will relieve traffic congestion in the northwest suburbs while reducing air pollution and helping us meet our obligations under the Clean Air Act."

In the past, Illinois has been a donor state to the Federal Highway Program. Problems between state and city leaders prevented Illinois from forming a united front against other states seeking federal transportation funds. Bipartisan unity among the Illinois delegation helped the state become a net recipient of federal transportation funds under this new legislation.

In addition to funding for Metra's STAR Line, Illinois benefited from four "projects of national and regional significance:" \$1 billion for the Metro East Trans-Mississippi Bridge, \$500 million for a western entrance to O'Hare International Airport, \$500 million for the Prairie Parkway and \$1.2 billion for freight rail upgrades.

The Senate passed a \$318 billion transportation bill earlier this month. The two bills must now be reconciled in conference and a vote is expected later this spring on final legislation.